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TO KILL A VAMPIRE?: THROUGH THE HEARTH

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
English

by
Charlsie Canterbury Lamos
December 2012

Accepted by:
Dr. Kimberly Manganelli, Committee Chair
Dr. Cameron Bushnell
Dr. Erin Goss

But first, on earth as Vampire sent,
Thy corse shall from its tomb be rent;
Then ghastly haunt thy native place,
And suck the blood of all thy race;
There from thy daughter, sister, wife,
At midnight drain the stream of life;
Yet loathe the banquet which perforce
Must feed thy livid living corse:
Thy victims ere they yet expire
Shall know the demon for their sire,
As cursing thee, thou cursing them,
Thy flowers are wither'd on the stem.
But one that for thy crime must fall,
The youngest, most beloved of all,
Shall bless thee with a *father's* name ---
That word shall wrap thy heart in flame!
Yet must thou end thy task, and mark
Her cheek's last tinge, her eye's last spark,
And the last glassy glance must view
Which freezes o'er its lifeless blue;
Then with unhallow'd hand shalt tear
The tresses of her yellow hair,
Of which in life a lock when shorn,
Affection's fondest pledge was worn,
But now is borne away by thee,
Memorial of thine agony!

from Lord Byron's *The Giaour* (1812)

ABSTRACT

Long before *Dracula* was terrorizing English families, Emily Brontë's Heathcliff captivated Victorian audiences. Critics such as James Twitchell propose that Emily Brontë carefully creates the possibility of Heathcliff as a metaphorical vampire, using his unknown parentage and his physical descriptions throughout the novel as evidence for this claim. Indeed, my thesis examines how Heathcliff exhibits characteristics of the vampire in his decimation of the English families in the novel by consuming the Earnshaw's and Linton's properties, monies, and women. In Brontë's and Bram Stoker's novels, the vampires prey upon humanity, consuming property, lives, and bloodlines. However, although vampires are often represented as creatures of death and destruction that annihilate British families in *Wuthering Heights* and *Dracula* and invade American homes in *The Vampire Diaries*, we cannot view the vampire as simply a monster. These violent acts are a result of the vampire's effort to reclaim its humanity. Analyses of the vampire's domestication, sexuality, or allure often overshadow a study of this quest. The struggle against and with humanity spans cultures, and this juxtaposition is made clear in an examination of the vampire's relationship with the human family. Print media such as serials and novels, along with film and television series, highlight the vampire's desire to become part of a collective human consciousness, as well as the anxieties that its inclusion in humanity raises.

A study of the vampire in the domestic sphere reveals cultural anxieties about racial, class, and national differences, superiority, and the self, especially in Victorian and contemporary texts. Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* are

two of several works that exemplify the fears of domestic England through the novels' families; generations later, Kevin Williamson's and Julie Plec's *The Vampire Diaries* also exposes unspoken anxieties like the safety of the community, the future of the human family, and the ambiguity of good and evil present in contemporary America. These wildly differing texts acknowledge eerily similar insecurities through the "safe" medium of the vampire. Its interaction with and search for family and humanity act as an analogy for each culture's battle with otherness and itself.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, friends, and family. To each person whom I have begged and pleaded to read a single paragraph, I humbly and sincerely thank you and offer my undying gratitude.

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I would like to give proper recognition to my thesis director Dr. Kimberly Manganelli and the rest of my committee, Dr. Cameron Bushnell and Dr. Erin Goss, for their selfless counsel and support. They have all freely given of their sparse time and vast knowledge for the development of my thesis. Dr. Manganelli in particular has shown her depth of character and strength of spirit through her patience and graciousness despite endless questions, setbacks, chaos, confusion, and computer glitches. She has been a model of academic and personal excellence throughout this experience and my time in this program. Being allowed the opportunity to study under her tutelage and to have such expert input as my readers possess has been an undeserved privilege, and I submit to you my most earnest and heartfelt appreciation.

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TO KILL A VAMPIRE?: THROUGH THE HEARTH

“I wanted it to be for all of us. A place we could all call home. A place we could all be a family. None of us would ever have to be alone again,” pleads Klaus Mikaelson, the villain of *The Vampire Diaries* (“Bringing out the Dead”). Klaus, the only half-vampire/half-werewolf in his vampire family, piteously and sincerely tries to explain to his livid siblings as they literally begin to encircle and assail him that the mansion he built was meant to house his hybrid and biological families. After his biological family rejects his offer and his hybrid family is forced to leave, Klaus again admits, “I wanted a family,” highlighting his loneliness (“The Murder of One”). The vampire figure has been “a popular literary figure [since] the beginning of the nineteenth century,” and several critics, from Joan Gordon and Veronica Hollinger to Sandra Tomc and Milly Williamson have studied the vampire and the domestic sphere through what they have termed “the domestication of the vampire” (Senf 141; Gordon and Hollinger 2). After *Dracula* kicked off the twentieth century, the spotlight remained on the vampire, a figure mesmerizing the public since the 1970s with Anne Rice’s *Vampire Chronicles*, Stephen King’s *Salem’s Lot*, Joss Whedon’s *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel*, Joel Schumacher’s *The Lost Boys*, Quentin Tarantino’s *From Dusk Till Dawn*, *Van Helsing*, and *Blade*. In 2012, the vampires, starring in hit movies, television series, and books such as *The Vampire Diaries*, the *Twilight* series, *True Blood*, *Let Me In*, *Being Human*, the film remake of

Dark Shadows, and the *Underworld* series show that the figure is still immensely popular and seeking a place in the domestic sphere to “call home.”¹

Many critics have compared the vampire in nineteenth-century English literature to the vampire in contemporary Western culture, emphasizing that these were and are great periods of growth for the vampire character. Prior to the last two centuries, the vampire had been relegated to the realm of superstition and folklore. With the development of the Victorian novel, the vampire experienced a popularity that has continued even to current television series. Many critics, including Matthew Beresford, Jules Zanger, Gordon and Hollinger, have affirmed the significance of television and film in the evolution of the vampire. Victorian novels and contemporary American television series share similar themes in regard to the vampire, and both were and are the chosen forms of media for the masses. The novels and television shows share more than just mass popularity; both are examples of serialization. The vampire, too, is an example or figure of seriality. Just as the vampire creates a series of creatures like him, texts centered on the vampire also inspire remakes or reinterpretations in the same and different

¹ These first three current series existed first as novels (LJ Smith’s *The Vampire Diaries*, Stephenie Meyers’ *Twilight*, and Charlaine Harris’s *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*), which were then adapted for television and film screens. In fact, each example listed derived from or inspired other creations of the same story. Several of Rice’s novels have been turned into films; Whedon’s television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* followed a film of the same name, initiated comic books and video games, and inspired a spin-off series, *Angel*, following the reluctant vampire hero the series is named for. *The Lost Boys*, *From Dusk Till Dawn*, and *Blade* all became three-part film series, with *The Lost Boys* also producing a novel, *From Dusk Till Dawn* releasing a video game, and *Blade* reigniting interest in the Marvel comic of the same name and encouraging further “superhero movie series.” The film *Van Helsing* derived loosely from the *Dracula* character Abraham Van Helsing. The American television series *Being Human* followed the success of the British series of the same name, and the film *Let Me In* remade the Swedish film *Let the Right One In* (inspired by the novel) into English. Even the recent film *Dark Shadows* remakes a 1960s soap opera *Dark Shadows*.

mediums. Because they are consumed on such a mass scale, these serials, whether novel, televised show, or film, act as a gauge of the vampire's evolving position in culture.

In contemporary culture, the vampire has been domesticated and relegated to a specific role as outsider, loner, and parasite who is pushed to the margins of community and home. The domestication of the vampire took place after Victorian and contemporary societies became enthralled with and embraced the story of the vampire. Beresford points to two causes for its domestication: *Dracula* and the "theatre, cinema and television exploitation of the being that ultimately caused the shift towards the modern conception of... an entirely new vampire in the twenty-first century" (140-41). Beresford punitively censures this new vampire as "a parody of what he once was;" being domesticated means that the vampire is no longer 'scary enough' (140). Where Beresford blames *Dracula* and the notoriety or recognizability this work lent to the vampire for what he considers the vampire's tragic domestication, Zanger calls *Dracula* an example of the "old" vampire against which the "new" vampire as a popular mass culture figure" is compared (17). Zanger's focus on the domesticated vampire includes its communal, rather than solitary nature, which allows for a "greater degree of social complexity" (18, 22). He also examines the development of the "'good' vampire, the reluctant killer, the self-doubting murderer" and the distinction between "'good' vampires [and] bad ones" (19, 21). Zanger poses that contemporary culture "*must* identify with the lesser of evils provided for it," implying that modern audiences are forced to "choose between" the good and the bad vampire (21 emphasis added). Whereas Beresford and Zanger assert that the vampire's domestication comes from a change in the portrayal of the vampire, Margaret L. Carter

explains that the figure's transformation comes from "a change in cultural attitudes toward the outsider, the alien other" (27). While contemporary culture, to Zanger, seemed to have no choice in its relationship with the vampire, Carter shows "contemporary American society...glorifying and—at least to some extent—rewarding" the vampire (27). Indeed, culture has domesticated the vampire by embracing it and its enticing otherness.

While these critics thoroughly analyze the vampire and its evolution as a character and in culture, their focus on the vampire and its function in the domestic sphere has remained broad.² Zanger makes a passing reference to the idea of family when discussing the "old" and "new" vampire, and Carol Senf only briefly mentions the family as a factor in the transformation of the vampire, but no critic has extensively studied how the vampire and the family interact within the domestic sphere. In Victorian literature, the domestic sphere often serves as a metaphor for the British empire; the English family was seen as pure and good, a complete unit that stood whole and alone over all in its possession like domestic England above its colonies. An analysis of the vampire that invades the family in Victorian novels reveals anxieties of national and racial difference, specifically fears of contamination or infiltration by "others" from different races or nations like the natives of the English colonies. Arata notes Van Helsing's deduction in

² Carol Senf, unlike Zanger or Beresford, views the nineteenth-century vampire not as an example of the "old" vampire, but as a transitional figure, "a mid-range between" the vampire of folklore and the vampire of the twentieth century, or contemporary culture (146). In regards to the cultural role of the vampire, Senf and Carter both show the vampire as an accepted member of popular literature and mainstream culture; they argue that the vampire has changed, but that society has experienced far greater metamorphosis and by embracing the vampire has allowed it to be a part of the domestic sphere. For a succinct summary of Senf's overall views on the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth-century vampires, see pages 162-163 of *The Vampire in Nineteenth-century English Literature*.

Dracula that “vampires follow ‘in [the] wake of’ imperial decay;” these creatures are “generated by racial enervation and decline of empire,” which in this novel is “explicitly... the decline of the *British* empire” (629, emphasis added; 626). The vampire is forced to “bear the weight of the culture’s fears over its declining status.” In the Victorian text, it is the decay of English dominance, but many contemporary television series use the vampire to reflect anxieties over the decline of the traditional or nuclear family structure (Arata 629). Therefore, a focused discussion of how the ideas of the vampire and the family function, overlap, and subvert each other will shed new light on the vampire and the family in contemporary society.

The texts that perhaps most clearly express the relationship between the vampire and the family in each era are Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*, Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, and Kevin Williamson’s and Julie Plec’s *The Vampire Diaries*. *The Vampire Diaries* and *Dracula* feature ‘literal’ vampires in a human world, while *Wuthering Heights*’ ambiguous antagonist Heathcliff can be read as a metaphorical vampire, as both Carol Senf and James Twitchell have done (though Senf goes on to argue that Heathcliff and the elder Catherine are likely literal vampires). Like Heathcliff, Klaus Mikaelson, an Original vampire on *The Vampire Diaries* series, relishes the principles of revenge, manipulation, hatred, and evil; he, too, is an outsider among his own family. His hybrid status, half-werewolf and half-vampire, reveals his mother’s infidelity and indiscretion to his full vampire siblings. For Klaus and Heathcliff, it is not solely their ‘vampire’ nature that makes each an outsider within his ‘family;’ primarily, it is their vengeful and vindictive natures that alienate their families. The knowledge of each anti-hero’s

difference—Heathcliff’s adoption, Klaus’s ambiguous parentage—heavily shapes these antagonists. However, the latter differs from Heathcliff in the love he still bears for his family and his desire to belong to a family whether they are of his own making, creating hybrids who can share his supernatural experiences, or his brothers and sister from his human life. In this essay’s opening quote, Klaus is begging his brothers and sister not to leave the mansion he has built for them, but his past actions have pushed them away and breached their trust. Even his closest sibling, his sister Rebekah, abandons him and bitingly quips, “We’re leaving you, Nik... Then you will be alone. Always and forever.” (“Bringing out the Dead” *The Vampire Diaries*). Klaus, in Byronic hero fashion, acknowledges himself as the villain but inadvertently exposes his subtle humanity, earnestly professing “I wanted a family. They just didn’t want me.” (“The Murder of One”).

The Original vampire family proves to be broken; this brokenness is only amplified when the gaze is moved to the human families of this series. If the family is broken, how are the vampire and the human to survive in narratives together? Most simply, they aren’t. In the battle between the vampire and the family, the vampire will destroy the family. I argue, however, that as the vampire continues to wage war on the domestic sphere, it destroys itself. Thus, these vampires are inadvertently committing suicide not by a stake through the heart, but in a twisted pun, through the hearth, as they attempt to claim a space for themselves in the human domestic sphere. In such Victorian novels as *Wuthering Heights* and *Dracula*, as well as contemporary television series like *The Vampire Diaries*, the individual homes of human families under duress typify nations

imperiled by those “others” they refuse to admit into their homes. If the vampires are invited into these houses, if the excluded become the included, the fate of the nation becomes unclear. In these texts, humans and vampires alike are seeking to belong to a home, and yet, broken families abound, even before contact with the vampire. This paper will examine how these human families are “broken” and the significance of their disunity. The vampire, a monster that cannot repress its destructive nature, seeks a place in the home as a means to reclaim its former humanity. I argue, however, that this creature ensures its own demise as well as the destruction of the human family it desires to return to. Humanity, or the thirst for it, becomes the vampire’s undoing.

“Then Ghastly Haunt Thy Native Place, And Suck the Blood of All Thy Race”

Wuthering Heights is a unique example within the tradition of the vampire in the domestic sphere because it begins with a complete family that deteriorates only after the introduction of a foreign, unfamiliar character (which is something unusual for the community according to Nelly Dean) (Brontë 45). At the beginning of Nelly Dean’s tale to Mr. Lockwood, the housekeeper paints a picture of a complete rural English family: father, mother, son, and daughter. The family is perfectly balanced and whole, thriving as an ideal representation of nineteenth-century domestic England. But when Mr. Earnshaw, master of the Earnshaw home and by analogy the English homeland, sympathetically reaches out and brings home an orphan, he does not simply expand his natural family, but incorporates and gains dominion over the unknown; the process of forming a large empire like Britain’s works in much the same fashion as “adopting” colonies whose cultures were often perceived as childish or childlike, which is what Mr. Earnshaw

assumes the “gypsy” orphan, Heathcliff to be. This “gipsy brat” from Liverpool is immediately identified as “dark almost as if it came from the devil” and a “dirty, ragged, black-haired child” that instead of English speaks “some gibberish,” but he is never positively classified as a member of a specific race; throughout the novel, he is compared to or suggested as Lascar, American, Spanish, Blackamoor, Chinese, or Indian (Brontë 37, 50, 57). His ambiguous origins and race creates anxiety in Nelly and Hindley, the Earnshaw’s only son. Even Mrs. Earnshaw “was ready to fling it out of doors,” but “peace was restored” and the “mistress grumbled herself calm” after the master of the home affirms the orphan’s belonging and creates an opening for Heathcliff to pass in the household (Brontë 37). Nelly makes provisions to ensure that the traditional family dynamic is not disrupted, but Mr. Earnshaw rejects her actions. Instead, Heathcliff is installed in the home and given “the name of a son who died in childhood” in an effort to replace a natural family member (Brontë 38). Yet, Mr. Earnshaw himself calls Heathcliff “the poor fatherless child” throughout his childhood. On one hand, by granting the child the name of a deceased son, which according to Maja-Lisa von Sneidern was “Earnshaw’s first born’s name,” the family patriarch “Christianizes” the orphan; in distinct contradiction, he suffers alienation and harassment by Hindley and Nelly, reminding him that he is a bastard who does not belong in the home (176). By treating Heathcliff as the firstborn, Mr. Earnshaw unknowingly creates conflict with Hindley, prompting a consuming and destructive loathing in both Hindley and Heathcliff.

According to Nelly, the vampiric Heathcliff “from the very beginning... bred bad feeling in the house” (Brontë 38). As if to prove his vampirism, he consumes all available

resources and power, marrying Isabella “on purpose to obtain power over [Edgar]” and coercing Linton to bequeath “the whole of his, and what had been [the younger Catherine’s], moveable property, to his father,” Heathcliff (150, 284). In this manner, he obtains the estate of Thrushcross Grange, just as earlier Heathcliff, “the guest,” became “the master of Wuthering Heights” through manipulation, declaring Hareton Earnshaw, “Now, my bonny lad, you are *mine*!” (183-4). Heathcliff even begins to resemble the vampire during his final illness, with hollow cheeks, “ghastly paleness,” “glittering, restless eyes,” and “sharp white teeth” (318-19, 324). However, the aspects of the vampire in the young Heathcliff seemed avoidable or at least dormant; after Hindley is sent away, it seems that Heathcliff almost belongs and matters are at peace, but at Mr. Earnshaw’s death, the oldest son returns to reclaim the home from the servants and the other children. With Hindley arrives a wife, Frances, which “amazed us, and set the neighbours gossiping right and left,” especially since the late Mr. Earnshaw never knew of the union and the community surrounding Wuthering Heights does not “in general take to foreigners... unless they [the strangers] take to [them] first” (45). Interestingly, it is the “other” stranger, Hindley’s unknown wife, who rekindles the cycle of hatred, violence, and revenge in the Earnshaw family, just as it is the foreign narrator of Lord Byron’s *The Giaour* who curses the English infidel to become a monster and massacre his human family thirty-five years earlier. In both cases, the “other” condemns the protagonist to fulfill the doom of the vampire. Ironically, Frances, Hindley’s foreign wife, is the catalyst to Heathcliff’s degradation because Hindley, the new master of the Earnshaw home, makes the same mistake as his father; he allows himself to be ruled by his emotions and

passions. Her expression of “dislike” is enough to deprive Heathcliff of schooling and force him into manual, slave outdoor labor, denying him a place within the home and family and rendering him a slave to Hindley (46).

One of the first consequences of Heathcliff’s vampirism is seen through the transformation of his own father figure. He turns his adoptive caretaker, Mr. Earnshaw, into a frightful, uncivil man who was vexed by “a nothing...[which] was especially to be remarked if any one attempted to impose upon, or domineer over, his favourite: he was painfully jealous lest a word should be spoken amiss to him” (Brontë 41). Mr. Earnshaw turns against his own biological children, which provokes Hindley to hate Heathcliff and molds Cathy into “a wild, wicked slip,” “too mischievous and wayward for a favourite” (38, 42). The “bad feeling” Heathcliff breeds according to Nelly, exemplified in Mr. Earnshaw’s irritability, Cathy’s rebelliousness, and Hindley’s hatred, essentially in other characters, now begins to manifest itself in Heathcliff. After the master’s death and maltreatment by the new master, Hindley, Heathcliff seemed “truly...possessed of something diabolical,” displaying a “savage sullenness and ferocity” (65). The “degradation” of Heathcliff propitiated by Hindley’s wife and Catherine is one of many actions that begin to shift him from a metaphorical, psychic vampire toward literal acts/thoughts of vampirism.³ He unashamedly exclaims to Nelly before his new bride Isabella his feelings about Catherine and her husband Edgar: “The moment her regard ceased, I would have torn his heart out, and drunk his blood” (147). Heathcliff’s early

³ Catherine, who unknowingly admits to Heathcliff that a marriage with him would degrade her yet accepts a proposal from Edgar Linton, is to “blame [for] his disappearance...as she well knew” (88). Heathcliff’s three-year absence comes as a result of his love’s confession, a crushing blow to an already humiliated and abused young man.

years show the conflicting struggle to find a place in both the Earnshaw home and England. The Bhabha-esque included yet excluded nature of the relationship between Heathcliff and the Earnshaws begins the conflicting depiction of the vampire in the domestic sphere.⁴

Where the earlier text of *Wuthering Heights* struggles with the place of Heathcliff inside or outside the family, Stoker's *Dracula* takes no part in this struggle, but from the beginning, assigns the vampiric figure a definite place: excluded. Initially, Jonathan Harker travels to the East in the capacity of a solicitor finalizing a property sale in England with a Transylvanian noble, describing the estate, signing papers, and turning over keys. During Harker's first "day" with the Count at Castle Dracula, Harker deflects the Count's expressed desire to learn to speak the English tongue, which he has already studied in various books, with an ostensible compliment, "'But Count [...] you know and speak English thoroughly!'" (Stoker 25). When the Count reiterates that he knows the "grammar and the words" but not "how to speak them," Harker again redirects the Count's comments when he says, "'Indeed [...] you speak excellently'" (25). The Count, for the third time, admits that in foreign England, he would be recognized as a stranger; although he reveals his true intention to Harker by saying, "Here I am noble... I am master... I have been so long master that I would be master still" (25). Harker's comments are a (rather desperate) attempt to impress on the Count Homi Bhabha's "*difference that is almost the same, but not quite*" (126). The Englishman can allow the Transylvanian to speak English, to be Anglicized, because "to be Anglicized, is

⁴ The paradoxical treatment of Heathcliff and the vampire quite resembles the inconsistent depictions of foreigners to the English, especially the colonized West Indians and those of mixed blood.

emphatically not to be English”; an Anglicized man may be in all ways the same as a pure-bred Englishman but he can never be exactly the same because his country of birth and ancestry is not Mother England, though it may be one of her colonies (128). Stoker’s novel makes the vampire’s place clear at the start, the domestic sphere of England rejects those who wish to be ‘the same,’ whether purely English or simply more than Anglicized.⁵

Harker and England exclude Dracula and his advances to be part (or master) of the domestic sphere, but Harker and Van Helsing’s band of men cannot so easily disentangle themselves from the paradox of inclusion and exclusion. Through shared experiences with the vampire and the loss of Lucy Westenra to the vampire curse, a ragtag, adoptive “family” is formed including Lucy’s best friend and her husband Mina and Jonathan Harker, her doctor Professor Abraham Van Helsing, her suitors Dr. John Seward and Quincey Morris, and her fiancé the Honorable Arthur Holmwood. Though this strange construction bridges different American, British, and Dutch nationalities, upper and emerging middle classes, and medical, legal, and several other backgrounds, this group bonds thoroughly over their grief and common goal of eliminating the vampire threat. However, the idea of being included but still excluded creeps from a general struggle between humanity versus Dracula into what appears to be a tightly knit company. This group is a microcosm of national, class, and gender differences; each member comes from a different socioeconomic background or upbringing, but Mina is

⁵When Dracula appears only as a man eager to procure property in England, Harker is willing to include him within the domestic sphere (to an extent) but when his true identity is revealed the difference becomes intolerable.

the only one to know a different experience because of her “lesser” gender. When Mina Harker is targeted by Dracula and the provisional “family” decides to take action, Harker recounts that “the very first thing we decided was that Mina should be in full confidence; that nothing of any sort—no matter how painful—should be kept from her” (Stoker 308). However, as she begins to show changes such as sharpened teeth, hardened eyes, and a supernaturally compelled silence, all signs of the influence of the vampire, Van Helsing admits “we must keep her ignorant of our intent” to an assenting Dr. Seward (343). Mina becomes the victim of Dracula but also is victimized within the domestic sphere, included yet excluded in her own family.⁶

In the midst of this clash between including and excluding Mina from “family” meetings, the group reveals another aspect of the vampire narrative, the fight for a woman and metaphorically through her, domestic England. Mina represents Mother England, whose traditional values and family are threatened by outside forces and twentieth century modernization. In *Dracula*, the group must race against time to save Mina from becoming the loathsome vampire, the fate Count Dracula has claimed for her. What makes Madam Mina a character worth ‘saving’ or ‘protecting’ from the vampire? This woman, Mina, and even Brontë’s young Cathy, is the epitome of domesticity. She represents the desirable feminine domestic figure: chaste, loving, kind, caring, selfless,

⁶ The domestic sphere was the only place Mina was allowed to be fully “included.” Publicly, she is confined to the home, taking notes and compiling the information gathered through the men’s various employments and excursions. Professor Abraham Van Helsing brings the expertise and knowledge in dealing with vampires, Dr. John Seward’s patient Renfield allows him unique access to Count Dracula, while American Quincey Morris and British noble Arthur Holmwood use their connections and varying degrees of authority to make arrangements for travel among other duties. Mina, because she does not possess the knowledge and skill of the Drs. Van Helsing and Seward, the associations Quincey Morris and Arthur Holmwood have collected, or the intimate experience with Count Dracula that her husband Jonathan Harker shares, is barred from participating in anything other than the domestic sphere; she functions only within their assembled family unit.

and compassionate. In an active role, Mrs. Harker provides support for the men by providing a shoulder to cry on, motivation, intelligence and assistance in collecting and organizing information and a plan against the vampire enemy.

As Lucy was the focal point of the attentions of Dr. Seward, Van Helsing, Holmwood, and Morris in her illness, Mina, even before her affliction, becomes the focal point of the little band of men. She is the adoptive mother, sister, and daughter to Lucy's lovers and Van Helsing; she plays wife to Jonathan Harker, serving as a uniting agent between him and the novel's other males. This family unit, an unusual conglomeration of friends, acquaintances, and professional associates, revolves around this central feminine figure. In both cases of Lucy and Mina, the relationship of family flows through the woman. In the unusual family dynamic, Mina fulfills a complex role outlined in an emotional scene with the grieving Lord Godalming, formerly Arthur Holmwood. Mina comforts the tearful, sobbing man while they mutually agree to maintain a "brother"- "sister" bond (Stoker 246-247). However, as Mina asks Arthur, "will you not let me be like a sister to you," her thoughts establish a mother bond while she "stroke[s] his hair as though he were [her] own child" (246). Godalming's final words in this scene institute a third attachment between Mina and the men of the "family," excluding her husband Jonathan; Mina recognizes the phrase "Little girl" as "the very words he had used to Lucy," his beloved, his lover (247). "Little girl," a term of affection, not only expresses Lord Godalming's tenderness for Lucy and Mina, but a special love for his home, England, often personified as a female or mother. Mina's legitimate role of wife and assumed roles of mother, sister, beloved, along with her representation of domestic

England and its future, explain why she must be protected, fought for, and saved from the great evil.

The younger Catherine of Thrushcross Grange realizes the ideal of domesticity as well, but not because she is so well-loved or protected as Mina Harker. Brontë's novel features the exploitation of "the younger Catherine's good heart and better nature" by Linton Heathcliff and Heathcliff; this father-son pair collaborate and manipulate this young girl's love for her father, Edgar Linton, into an arranged marriage between Linton Heathcliff and Catherine Linton, or Mrs. Heathcliff (von Sneidern 185). Little Cathy, Nelly Dean's "angel," is exposed to the draining and oppressive influence of the Heathcliffs before and during her captivity, molding her from "kind, sweet, good Catherine" into the "little witch" and "unmannerly wretch" Mr. Lockwood meets at the novel's start (Brontë 258, 16). The feminine domestic ideal has been, to a stranger's view, successfully corrupted by the dark influences of the vampiric Heathcliff. When the pressures exerted by Heathcliff and his son Linton are removed, the outward perception of Mrs. Heathcliff changes, as expressed in Mr. Lockwood's regret "at having thrown away the chance I might have had of doing something besides staring at [Catherine's] smiting beauty" (297). The younger Catherine was the center of the home both at Thrushcross Grange, where she was the only female and only child in the dwindling Linton home, and eventually at Wuthering Heights, where she fulfills her role as Linton's wife, assumes the responsibility of tutoring Hareton, and blooms into womanhood; she is the portrait of domesticity, earning her place in the center of the home.

Cathy's resilience adds another layer to the complex relationship of the vampire to the home and the woman at its core. Curiously, the women singled out for protection from or molestation by the vampire are often those already strong, those who consistently save, protect, and care for others; both the young Cathy and Mina Harker exhibit these qualities. The attribute of independent strength seems to be more descriptive of the Victorian New Woman, rather than the idealized Angel in the House, but as the Victorian novel seeks to topple the vampire's hold in the domestic sphere, the female characters must possess this trait to survive. Though Sally Ledger admits that "the New Woman as a concept was, from its inception, riddled with contradictions," Charles Prescott and Grace Giorgio attempt to define this idea as a woman who "actively sought educational fulfillment and work" in previously male-only fields and rejected "the home and traditional motherhood as the only acceptable occupation for women," but again Ledger contends that "all that [is] certain [is] that she [is] dangerous, a threat to the *status quo*" (Ledger 11, 16, Prescott and Giorgio 488). Mina could be classified as one of the newly created "Typing Girls" with her secretarial and clerical qualifications, even though she values her role as Jonathan's wife above her profession. This 'strong,' liberated New Woman threatens Victorian England's domestic sphere by liberating her; she is no longer stuck within the confines of the home, but can take responsibility for herself. Mina proves that she can take care of herself, though she selects to "accept [the mens'] chivalrous care of me" rather than completely upend the accepted domestic sphere (Stoker 259). Even the small details of Stoker's novel, like the names of the ships Dracula uses for travel (the *Demeter* and the *Czarina Catherine*, named for Catherine II of Russia), embody strong

female figures, of motherhood and agriculture, or of country and leadership; Stoker makes certain to associate Dracula and his transportation with commanding women to further the idea that an independent, New Woman is as dangerous, as threatening, as foreign as the vampire.⁷ This contradictory New Woman stands in contrast against the “angel of the house,” but the Victorian heroine’s associations as of yet are unclear.

Mina and young Cathy could be performing the “angel in the house” function, devoted to the care of their households, but this new angel of the house is “not quite” the same; submissiveness becomes a weakness when the domestic sphere is threatened by the vampire (Bhabha 127). The younger Catherine is forced to mature quickly at *Wuthering Heights*, and a fairly independent Mina survives her encounter with Dracula, while her more feminine friend Lucy does not. The center of the home shifts when an unfamiliar dynamic is introduced; the role of the woman, and with it the ideal, must be altered or modified, given the strength to survive a vampire attack. Additionally, both women represent domestic England, so choosing to portray them as helpless, defenseless victims poorly reflects the idea of a premier global power headed by a queen. During the era when *Wuthering Heights* and *Dracula* were published, England was under the reign of Queen Victoria, who led the country through a “growing pains” stretch of industrialization and urbanization. The traditional Victorian “angel in the house” on a national scale would be equipped to care for domestic England, not the colonial empire of the new age. Instead, England is better embodied by the New Woman with her strength and independence. No matter how much Mina or Catherine belong to the category of the

⁷ For an in-depth discussion of the conflicting role of Mina in *Dracula*, see Prescott and Giorgio’s “Vampiric Affinities: Mina Harker and the Paradox of Femininity in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*”.

New Woman or the “angel of the house,” these women are unmistakably members, often caretakers, of a family, however broken.

Wuthering Heights is exceptional in the examples of the vampire saga mentioned so far in that it begins with a whole English family; every other case, Victorian or contemporary, begins with the human family in some way disrupted by ‘natural causes,’ such as Elena Gilbert’s parents killed in a car accident, Mina and Jonathan Harker’s deceased parents, or Lucy Westenra and Arthur Holmwood’s ailing parents, but this novel, in Nelly Dean’s voice, clearly notes that it is not until a “foreign” child is introduced that the Earnshaw children begin to suffer.⁸ The older generation of children (Hindley, Catherine, Heathcliff, Edgar, and Isabella) all belong to ‘large’ families, compared to the younger generation. Linton, Catherine, and Hareton are all only children, and all are motherless, and then finally, parentless by the story’s end. The first generation includes a perfect ratio of sons and daughters with the exception of the foundling Heathcliff. The vampiric Heathcliff steals the life from the natural children in order of those most exposed to his influence: first Catherine, his obsession and constant childhood companion, then Hindley, Heathcliff’s tormentor and tenant of *Wuthering Heights*, Isabella, his estranged wife, and even Edgar, the man who stole Catherine from him. Each of these characters became the object of his torment, even the woman he loved, until each one dies. When Catherine failed to abandon her husband for Heathcliff, when Hindley lost his wife and will to live, when Isabella mistakenly fell for a “fierce, pitiless,

⁸ Other examples of disrupted families in Victorian and contemporary vampire tales include: *True Blood*’s Sookie Stackhouse’s parents drowned, *Twilight*’s Bella Swan’s parents divorced, Le Fanu’s Laura never knew the mother who died in her infancy, and Polidori’s Aubrey was also orphaned in childhood. Though the examples of *Carmilla* and *The Vampyre* do not mention the reasons behind the deaths of these parents, there are no grounds to suspect that the vampire was involved in such occurrences.

wolfish man,” and when Edgar fails to keep his daughter sequestered at Thrushcross Grange, Heathcliff’s attentions turn poisonous and eventually fatal for its intended subject (Brontë 102).

While *Wuthering Heights* may begin with the human family intact, the second generation of Earnshaws, Lintons, and Heathcliffs do not experience the same ‘good fortune’ as the “originals.” Catherine’s and Hareton’s mothers die shortly after their births, leaving them in the care of a lone father figure. Linton Heathcliff, the “pale, delicate, effeminate boy... [with] a sickly peevishness” unnatural to the properly English Linton and Earnshaw families, is raised by a single mother until her death forces him into the care of a violent and ruthless “foreign” Heathcliff (Brontë 196). Each of these children experience the loneliness of being an only child and the care of a single parent, in most cases, a father. Heathcliff’s passions seem to be the cause of this ‘only child’ phenomenon; the object of his revenge, love, or hate cannot survive to produce more offspring, not Catherine, not Isabella. Scarred and duped, Isabella never truly recovers from the loveless marriage trap Heathcliff devises as a means for revenge on Catherine and Edgar and after escaping his grip continues on weakly, caring for her sickly son until her life slips away. Similarly, Catherine, when she cannot separate herself from Edgar or more precisely Heathcliff, succumbs to delusion and death, believing Heathcliff has pushed her to the brink of insanity when she is faced with a life devoid of his presence and intense affection.

The only child phenomenon, prevalent in Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*, also flourishes in Stoker’s *Dracula*; all of the novel’s characters appear to be only children.

Indeed, with the exception of Lucy and Lord Godalming, the little band seems to be made up of orphans, or near-orphans; with Britain's superpower status declining at the end of the century when the novel was published, Stoker's orphans are physical representations of domestic England's slowing industrialization and global importance or influence. Stoker's work reverses the trend of orphaned characters in the final note, a ray of hope found in Quincey (Jonathan Abraham Arthur) Harker. Where the influence of the vampire works to ensure only children and then to transform those only children into orphans in *Wuthering Heights*, Dracula's influence is imperative in order to even create an only child; the blood of two English and two foreign strong human men was not enough to save Lucy Westenra, but the blood of the vampire in Mina Harker strengthened her and Jonathan's English bloodlines to create a single offspring, an only child saved from orphanage. Arata contends that vampire blood, in Quincey Harker, has been "appropriated and transformed to nourish a faltering race" (643). From the English perspective, all threats to England's power have been "neutralized" and used to invigorate a declining race, but from a less invested perspective, it seems as though the violence with which security and the possibility of a Quincey Harker was procured and the way the blood of the vampire was used to "nourish" and stabilize "the nation, as well as the family" allows Dracula the victory (643).

Dracula's attempt to infiltrate the English family ensures the death of any remaining parent figures, leaving the "little band" to fight to protect what remains, the domestic sphere as woman, Mina. However, his strong blood is needed to fortify a weakening English bloodline struggling to produce an heir; the child Quincey Harker,

though fully English, is thoroughly foreign, sharing his American 'uncle's' namesake, born after his mother's blood has been mingled with Dracula's, and sitting on Van Helsing's lap, his adoptive grandfather. The threat to the family now is not that it will be literally destroyed through death, but by destruction of the bloodline, allowing foreign influences to overtake the feeble strength of a single English child. Arata believes that the vampire has the "ability to produce literally endless numbers of offspring" which stands in contrast to the "far less prolific British men," who for the most part, "being unmarried, cannot father legitimately" (631). Thus, the feeble English bloodline in Quincey Harker has been overwhelmed by the blood of Dracula in his mother and the blood shed by American Quincey Morris, his namesake, and other makeshift father figures also represented in his name. As Arata hauntingly notes: "Quincey's multiple parentage only underscores the original problem. How secure is any racial line when five fathers are needed to produce one son?" (632).

The novel ends with a complete family picture, father, mother, son, even a grandfatherly figure in Van Helsing to pass down knowledge to a new generation, which contrasts the lonely only children coming together over the course of the novel. Dracula is not responsible for the trend of orphaned only children, but he certainly exacerbates the occurrence by triggering the death of Mrs. Westenra, the only older mother figure in the novel. As Dracula (or his blood) assists Mina in producing a child, he cuts off the bloodlines (parents) of the current generation; the vampire advances the idea of both the orphan and the only child. Dracula is responsible for orphaning Lucy Westenra, as well as targeting orphans such as Jonathan and Mina Harker. He both creates and attempts to

eliminate the parentless child; similarly, he helps create the only child, Quincey Harker, and attempts to eradicate the older generation of only children, successfully turning Lucy and killing Quincey Morris. The vampire, by forming and pursuing the orphan and the only child, is severing the only ties of family in the novel.⁹

After exploring the woman and children of the home, the relationship, the exact social contract, between members of a family unit and between the family members and the vampire comes into question. How does the vampire figure negotiate the bonds of family in Victorian literature? The contradictory inclusion and exclusion of Heathcliff in the Earnshaw family prevents him from truly claiming the bonds of son or brother. His liminal status, not a slave, not a brother, not a son, not a bastard, not a lover, leaves him no place in or outside of the home; his ambiguous racial identity functions in the same way, excluding him from the home and the community he unsettlingly belongs to.

Instead, Heathcliff spends three years crafting a new identity of an apparent gentleman to take back to his old home.¹⁰ His new identity and status eliminates the need to develop family bonds but control and manipulate the family members; for example, he marries Isabella as a way of orchestrating bloodlines. Isabella produces a son, while Catherine

⁹ Another Victorian novel published between Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* and Stoker's *Dracula*, Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, provides a bridge between these two texts. The novella begins with a father and a daughter, a lonely single parent household like the second generation children in *Wuthering Heights* knew. Laura, like the young Cathy, never knew the mother who "died in [her] infancy" and led a lonely existence until the mysterious arrival of Carmilla (89). The vampire Carmilla/ Mircalla, Countess of Karnstein, is unable to separate the only child from her father, perhaps because of the distant blood connection they share on Laura's mother's side. *Carmilla* features a lonely only child attached to her father, a bond that remains unbroken to the end, though tainted by the haunting memory of the vampire. This Victorian novella opens with an only child, a half-orphan, and concludes with the same father-daughter pair, leaving Dracula the freedom to redefine the idea of the only child and the orphan and the bonds of family.

¹⁰ Heathcliff's new identity and fortune are as ambiguous as his origins. Whether he remained in England or traveled abroad, joined the army or the slave trade, he is careful to never reveal the occurrences of his three-year absence.

gives birth to a daughter, the heir to the Linton family wealth. These new family lines provide Heathcliff with a method for revenge on the Earnshaws and Lintons; he manipulates the younger Catherine into a marriage with his dying son and an imprisonment in his acquired home, Wuthering Heights, fashioning his own family and his own domestic space to fulfill his desires for vengeance and a place to belong.

To Heathcliff, the idea of family is equivalent to property, owning certain rights to or over another person; he views the bonds of family as a consumable object, a pleasure enjoyed through “its degradation, its demolition, its destruction” (von Sneidern 183). The concept of family bonds for consumption or personal gain, along with Heathcliff’s influence over other characters, obfuscates the relationships between family members. The older generation of children disown or distance their siblings; Edgar abandons Isabella after her unwise marital choice, and Catherine “kept aloof” from her brother and his corrupt companions (Brontë 89). In the younger generation, little Cathy reels after the revelations that Linton Heathcliff and Hareton Earnshaw are her first cousins. This information seems repulsive and dubious to all parties initially, because although the lives of these three cousins are intricately intertwined, each has such a different personality and behavior from the others that a close bond like cousinship seems altogether foreign. When the younger Catherine marries both cousins, the relationships of family are reformed into a new dynamic; the female works to absorb and appropriate this foreignness. Though Heathcliff cultivated this coarseness and arranged Catherine’s first marriage, she takes control after his and Linton’s deaths and attempts to repair the “degradation” he caused, unknowingly playing into his revenge. The new family, under

Catherine's and Nelly's management, is polluted by Hareton's rough nature, marriage, and a lack of strong male leadership, since the only candidates are a young, fairly naïve girl and her lower class maidservant; though Nelly and the younger Catherine appear at the end of the novel to have handled the estates and finances prudently, signaling that these women may be harbingers of the late nineteenth century independent New Woman. These two ways of interpreting the novel's end expose the anxiety created by the vampire: in one sense, the family is destroyed because there is no remaining patriarch, like a ship without a captain, but in another, perhaps darker, sense, the vampire has made way for the New Woman figure, conferring on the novel's women strength and independence.

As the death of Heathcliff, the last member of the older generation in *Wuthering Heights*, allows Catherine and Hareton a closer intimacy, the death of all remaining parents in *Dracula* is what locks the band of orphans together as a family and prompts the ensuing action. Previously, some of the complex social bonds in this text have been identified in an examination of Mina Harker as the domestic ideal; the absence or disappearance of parents has also been mentioned, but only in regards to the abundance of orphans. Mrs. Westenra, Lucy's mother, and Mr. Hawkins, a father figure for Jonathan Harker, die on September 18th, with Arthur Holmwood's father following suit a day or so later; these are the only three characters that are acknowledged as parental units. Their deaths take place almost exactly three-quarters of the way through the novel's events; even though this seems to be a late occurrence, this chain of deaths, including Ms. Lucy Westenra, expedites the action of the novel, beginning a seven-week whirlwind of

tracking, chasing, and slaying the vampires Lucy and Dracula. Van Helsing, a man who knows the cost of loss and death, mournfully relates how his family was broken by his “wife[,] dead to [him], but alive by Church’s law, though no wits, all gone” and his son, who “that dear boy [Arthur Holmwood], so of the age of mine own boy had I been so blessed that he live, and with his hair and eyes the same” stands as a reminder for the professor and “make[s] [his] father-heart yearn to him as to no other man” (Stoker 189-90). In this scene that shows the old man especially attaching himself emotionally to Arthur Holmwood because of a perceived resemblance to his lost son, the reader can see an example of the care, feeling, and dedication he devotes to the little band, which leads him to become an impromptu father, nearly the only paternal figure in a novel devoid of parents.

The Victorian texts *Wuthering Heights* and *Dracula* seem to be desperately relaying a warning message to their readers: the vampire and the family are a dangerous, often lethal, arrangement. At the feeble end, after unending death, *Wuthering Heights* pleads for the destruction of the vampire. To allow Heathcliff, the metaphorical vampire, into the whole English family was a mistake on Mr. Earnshaw’s part, an invitation for ruin. The only characters left alive are the young Catherine, her cousin and betrothed Hareton, the manservant Joseph, and the housekeeper, servant, and manager Nelly Dean; Heathcliff and his bloodline is eradicated by the end of the novel, eliminating the vampire and his physical offspring but not his influence. The Earnshaws and Lintons before their exposure to Heathcliff are complete with father, mother, son and daughter, but every one succumbs to death and degradation. Hareton, rough, uneducated, and ignorant, the would-

be master of Wuthering Heights, is subservient to his fiancé and tutor, Catherine, who in turn hands over the affairs of the estates Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange to Nelly, a servant as entrenched in these families as the actual members, because the young girl has “not learnt to manage her affairs yet, and [Nelly] act[s] for her: there’s nobody else;” Catherine, though the center of the home because of her femininity, is still not mature enough to handle the responsibilities of the domestic sphere, especially the finances and administration of two estates (Brontë 298). Brontë’s novel uses the vampire as a metaphor to blame and ultimately exorcise the “foreign” Heathcliff as the cause of the deaths and humiliations of these families.

From Drac the Ripper to Ripper Stefan: Modern Television, the Vampire, & Family

Victorian vampires like Dracula infiltrated the English family and by analogy domestic England in an intentional effort to destroy those entities; in contrast, the modern vampire often worms its way into the American family, fulfilling a need for belonging but inadvertently decimating the unit to which it so desires to belong. The brokenness of the family may or may not have been a calculated consequence of the vampire’s invasion of the domestic sphere, but it does assure the unintentional destruction of the vampire whereas Dracula and Heathcliff set out to destroy English families like the Harkers or the Earnshaws; the vampires of American television genuinely wish to join family units, which were already broken before their arrival. *The Vampire Diaries*’ Stefan Salvatore initially finds a place among the Gilbert family, and though he does not intend to destroy this generation of the Gilberts, his presence proves to be a killer influence. At first glance, vampires in twenty-first century media like Stefan are not the harbingers of doom Arata

describes; these new vampires are sexy, seductive, even sparkly, like those of the *Twilight* franchise or the good Salvatore brother, Stefan, although his skin does not glitter “like thousands of tiny diamonds” (Meyer 260). The brooding, “good” Stefan, despite his guilt at his reprehensible former self, eventually reverts to the rampaging bloodthirsty creature nicknamed “the Ripper,” confirming that the vampire myth has once again been made to “bear the weight of the culture’s fears over its declining status” (Arata 629). As the families of *The Vampire Diaries* further fracture under the stress of vampire interaction, anxieties about the decay of the traditional nuclear family structure and the power and influence of America on a global scale come to light; economic collapse, wars, and strained international relationships are not recent, or even the only, disquieting news to American citizens. The future of the nation is unsure, but the future of the family is already taking shape. By the time series like *The Vampire Diaries* and *True Blood* debuted, the nuclear structure as it was idealized in the 1950s was no longer the only acceptable type of family. The American family has been opened to redefinition, any one of several, often non-traditional, structures are considered “family.” The new question becomes whether or not the vampire too has a place in these new families.

Early on, *The Vampire Diaries* tackles the issue of carving a niche for the vampire in human society. Season 1 audiences see vampire Stefan Salvatore attaching himself to Elena Gilbert by attending the local high school in the first season, while Damon attempts to install himself within the social structure of the town of Mystic Falls as well; both brothers begin their “new” lives passing as humans. Stefan actively attempts to “belong” to his community; he joins the school’s football team, earns the trust of his “nephew”

Zach, and participates in obligatory “high school drama.” Damon uses human activities, dating Caroline, attending social functions, joining the Founder’s Council, at least initially as a camouflage, an act to hide his intention of being reunited with his vampire love, Katherine Petrova.¹¹ These actions, like Dracula or Heathcliff after his three year absence, are attempts to insert themselves into the domestic sphere of the community.

When Damon becomes involved in the domestic sphere, he follows in the steps of the adult Heathcliff, who used members of his family as means to satisfying his desire for revenge. Damon uses his ability to act human and interact with humans to gain trust and intentionally mask his desire for a reunion with Katherine; when Damon tells Stefan, “It’s important for the town to see us out and about like normal folk. We need to blend,” the audience can see his public acts toward Caroline or the Founder’s Council as a manipulation of the domestic sphere (“162 Candles” *The Vampire Diaries*). Stefan, too, manipulates the domestic sphere initially, granted in a less sinister manner. He enters Elena’s life and home, intentionally keeping his true identity as a vampire or parts of his identity secret from the human he most trusts throughout the entire series.¹²

The Salvatores are just one example of many who have followed in Heathcliff’s footsteps; their attempts to belong to community and home are reappropriations of the ancestral home. *The Vampire Diaries*’ Salvatore brothers and the Originals, *True Blood*’s Bill Compton, and the *Twilight* series’ Cullen family are all returning to a former

¹¹ Katerina Petrova, or Katherine Pierce, sired both Salvatore brothers. Prior to becoming a vampire, she was a supernatural being called “the Doppelganger.” Elena Gilbert is her doppelganger, almost an exact lookalike; her death is part of a ritual meant to awaken the dormant werewolf half of the Original Vampire and Hybrid, Klaus.

¹² Stefan also fails to mention initially that his attraction to Elena stems from her eerie resemblance to her doppelganger Katherine Pierce or that he killed multiple generations of the Gilbert family.

homestead, often the town, even the home, they once occupied in their human lives. Returning to a place considered home, especially during the human lifetime of the vampire, is an act that signifies inclusion in the domestic sphere of community. The vampire's ties with humanity are strongest at the site of their own former humanity, their previous human life. For the Salvatore brothers, Mystic Falls is the location of both their endowment and loss of humanity, the site of their human lives and deaths. This conflicting history could help explain why the brothers' involvement in the town's domestic sphere weakens or increases on a nearly constant basis, dependent upon the whim of the brothers or the Council or townspeople; in Mystic Falls, the brothers struggle most with the difference between their human and vampire natures.¹³

Curiously, when the Salvatore brothers periodically revisit their hometown of Mystic Falls, Virginia, after their childhood home is gone, they must room at their family's boarding house, a symbol of transience and anonymity; this combination perfectly caters to the vampire's inclusion in the domestic sphere in a way that still maintains distance. The boarding house also provides a balance between the public and private atmosphere; where the Mystic Grill, a local bar, is an entirely public place, the Salvatore boarding house is an intimate but open edifice often used for small gatherings during which plots are hatched to destroy the next big bad vampire. Despite the semi-

¹³ At the start of *True Blood*, Bill Compton returns to the Louisiana plantation he owned and lived in with his family before the Civil War and his transformation into a vampire, even renovating it into a livable home for himself and his protégé Jessica. The *Twilight* series reveals that the Cullen family, although not originally from the Forks, Washington, area, settled in the Pacific Northwest 70 years prior to the events of the first book; they return to Forks 2 years before Bella moves in with her father and meets Edward Cullen. Bill Compton reappropriates the physical home of his human life into a hollow haven from the harsh sunlight 150 years after the loss of his humanity; the Cullens, however, create a vibrant, open home in the shelter of a small, quiet, rainy town that offered them safety when they were completing their nuclear family unit.

public nature of the boarding house and since the return of the vampires, the eight-bedroom house has been empty of boarders, with only an occasional temporary occupant, human or vampire. This emptiness suggests that even though the vampire is included in the domestic sphere provided by the communal nature of a boarding house, humanity still cannot exist within the four walls of the home as long as the vampire is an inhabitant.

The first spoken words of *The Vampire Diaries* reveal a complex relationship to the domestic sphere (here referred to as the world): “For over a century I have lived in secret; hiding in the shadows, alone in the world. Until now. I am a vampire. This is my story... I shouldn't have come home. I know the risk. But I had no choice. I have to know her” (“Pilot”). Stefan Salvatore, in this frequently repeated voiceover, may not explain whether his secret life in the shadows was a choice, voluntary or involuntary, but clearly, he believes, though he is a vampire and “alone in the world,” that he belongs in a domestic space he can call “home.” Instead of selecting less absolute phrasing such as “I shouldn't have come back” or “I shouldn't have come here,” he deliberately identifies with a small Southern town and the boarding house operated by his descendants. The final section of Stefan's soliloquy points to the primary female protagonist, Elena Gilbert. Not only do Stefan and Damon Salvatore feel the compulsion to “know her,” the audience too must learn about her in order to understand what makes her so significant and why these vampires “have” to become part of her life.

In a particularly poignant moment in “Family Ties,” Damon remarks to Elena, “Doesn't it always come down to the love of a woman?” (Season 1 Episode 4 *The Vampire Diaries*). In light of the previous statement, an undeniable trend emerges,

reminiscent of *Wuthering Heights* and *Dracula*. The younger Catherine is encircled by male influences from her father Edgar to her uncle Heathcliff and her cousin Linton to her other cousin Hareton and even the tenant Mr. Lockwood, while Mina Harker is more lovingly protected and defended by her husband Jonathan, Professor Van Helsing, Dr. Seward, Quincey Morris, and Lord Godalming. Each vampire story features at its core a [human] woman, surrounded, protected, or fought over by a multitude of men (vampire or not). Vampire brothers Stefan and Damon fight each other in between epic battles against vengeful vampires like those buried beneath Falls Church or twisted, selfish Originals such as Klaus to protect Elena Gilbert, often with the help of her stepfather Alaric Saltzman, her best friends Bonnie and Caroline, and anyone else nearby. She is one of the latest additions in a long tradition of women considered worth “saving.”

What makes this woman, Elena of *The Vampire Diaries*, Sookie from *True Blood*, *Twilight*’s Bella, worth ‘saving’ is the fact that she represents, she is, the epitome of domesticity. She embodies the desirable feminine domestic figure; she is generally chaste and loving, “kind, caring, selfless” as Stefan describes Elena to his friend Lexi (“162 Candles” *The Vampire Diaries*). While she may have all of these commendable qualities, when the audience initially meets these contemporary examples of the ‘domestic ideal’ (Elena, Sookie, especially Bella), they are nearly helpless, inactive, and vulnerable.¹⁴

Elena may seem weak, but she displays the admirable attribute of placing others’ needs before her own, constantly attempting to save or protect those she cares about, like a less-

¹⁴ *True Blood*’s Sookie seems to be always under the care of a vampire or supernatural being, including Bill Compton and Eric Northman, though she flouts this protection to save those she loves, like her quest to locate Bill after his mysterious disappearance at the end of Season 2. Bella of *Twilight* seems to epitomize the damsel in distress, constantly watched over by the Cullen or Quileute clans, though she proves her strength through the birth of her daughter and the subsequent fight to protect her child.

trained version of Buffy the Vampire Slayer. When threatened by the Original vampire family, Elena confesses, “They’re willing to risk everyone that I love, and I’m not... I don’t question why you... try so hard to save me. You shouldn’t question why I try so hard to save all of you” (“The Sacrifice”). Even after she forms an alliance with the powerful Original brother Elijah, she must admit, “I know the deal I made... He promised to protect my friends. He never said a word about me” (“Crying Wolf”). This inner strength transforms Elena into a confident, independent woman, which only makes her more attractive.

These qualities of kindness, selflessness, and compassion alone are not enough to warrant the perpetual rescue from danger by so many friends. In the way that Mina and young Catherine Linton metaphorically represented domestic England, Elena symbolizes the morals valued by an American, specifically Southern, upbringing from an earlier time. She exemplifies values that are no longer found often in society; Elijah, an Original, admits, “I admire you, Elena. You remind me of qualities I valued long before my mother turned us. It’s not in your nature to be deceitful...” (“All My Children” *The Vampire Diaries*). Elena values honor, truth, honesty, and trust; she is steadfast, trustworthy, practical, and levelheaded, declaring “Trust breeds trust. You have to give it to get it.” (“Children of the Damned”). This is why Elena must be preserved; if she dies, the past and its values die with her.

The Salvatore brothers assume most of the responsibility in keeping Elena safe from harm, and in turn, she fulfills a series of complex roles between them and the other characters she considers family. Elena legitimately assumes the role of older sister to her

brother Jeremy, who in a second season twist is revealed to be her biological cousin; she expresses worry and frustration over his participation in recreational pharmaceuticals, asks Damon to free him from an unbearable burden of hurt and loss through compulsion, and finally sends him away from her and their home of Mystic Falls in a final effort to keep him safe. To Stefan, she is constantly a romantic interest, which occasionally includes the role of girlfriend. The love Stefan has for Elena generally means that he will be the chief party responsible for her wellbeing; when he fails, his brother Damon fulfills this necessary function. The relationship between Damon and Elena is complicated, wavering somewhere between friend and romantic interest; Elena attempts to maintain a distance from Damon, the dangerous vampire, but finds herself in an ever closer bond after Stefan becomes bloodthirsty and volatile. Always wedged between the two brothers, Elena often acts as the mediator, the “voice of reason,” during disputes or decisions; in this capacity that often forces Elena to physically force her body between the two vampires, the mother instinct Mina discusses begins to appear in Elena. She again adopts the mother persona when the brothers need the comfort that seemingly only she can provide. In a serious and honest apology, Elena explains to Damon, “You and I... we have something. An understanding. And I know that my betrayal hurt you, different from how it is with you and Stefan. But I’m promising you now, I will help you get Katherine back,” offering to repent for hurting him and to ease tensions between the brothers (“Fool Me Once”). She continues to torment herself over any division she causes between the two brothers, attempting as a mother does to love and care for the siblings equally. Like Mina Harker’s single legitimate role of wife and multiple assumed roles, such as mother,

sister, and beloved, Elena fulfills the legitimate roles of sister and friend in the human sphere, but assumes the faces of friend, lover, even mother within the vampire domestic sphere.¹⁵

As a sign of her status as a contemporary “angel of the house,” teenager Elena Gilbert, by the end of the second season, owns the deeds to three separate homes: the Gilbert family home, their vacation lake house, and the Salvatore boarding house, which the brothers signed over to her as a way of providing a safe-house from hostile vampires. In keeping with the legend of the vampire, the series does not allow the vampire to enter a private home without the permission of someone who resides over or owns the house. The possession of multiple abodes grants Elena a significant amount of power, a power to refuse the advances of the vampire into the home; she consistently elects to permit the vampire entry into one of these homes, which leaves her and the human family vulnerable to the influence of the vampire. Elena often grants access of her home to vampires that she trusts or that she cares for, like Stefan, Damon, Elijah, Caroline, and Tyler; however, she has riskily or unintentionally allowed other vampires to endanger her or her family’s lives by entering, such as Noah, under the guise of a pizza delivery boy, or Isobel, her biological mother. Her role in these domestic settings is not as a mediator between rivaling brothers, but between the vampire and the home. She is the one who

¹⁵ In a more specific sector of the vampire world, Elena fulfills multiple roles within the single Original family, from friend and ally to enemy to blood bank. The fact that one human being can satisfy such varying needs in such a bonded group reveals a deep dysfunction that even the vampires seem unaware of; the Original family’s “mimicry” of humanity, according to Bhabha’s discussion of mimicry and mockery, “*repeats* rather than *re-presents*” the typical dysfunctional human family and reveals a resemblance to human relationships but not a menace to (or awareness of) them (127-129).

controls or attempts to control the interaction each has with the other and to minimize the damage dealt.

Elena also fulfills a strange capacity for the primary antagonist for Seasons 2 and 3; to the Original vampire Klaus, she is his only means of creating a family. Klaus, a vampire-werewolf hybrid, requires her blood to sire new hybrids who will maintain a deep “sire bond” with him that provides “undying loyalty” and abate the feelings of loneliness and discontent he is plagued with (“Our Town” *The Vampire Diaries*). Though he has his own legitimate family, half-brothers and sisters, he cannot be at ease until he is able to use Elena as a blood bank in creating a family of creatures just like him, acknowledging that “the whole point of breaking the curse and becoming a hybrid was to make more hybrids” (“The Reckoning” *The Vampire Diaries*). Even though the vampire figure often preys on human blood and humanity to feed and generate new vampires, the fact that a human’s, expressly Elena’s, blood is an integral component in creating an entirely new species in a way returns the balance of power in favor of humanity; without her blood, Klaus would remain alone, a single hybrid without anyone to share his life experiences, as he confesses, “leaving [him] alone for all time” (“The Reckoning”).

Unlike the Victorian vampire figure Heathcliff, who has no biological family to speak of and who is a foreigner in his adopted “family,” the contemporary vampire is a part of an identifiable family unit. *The Vampire Diaries* features several examples of this occurrence; the show’s feature pair, the Salvatore brothers, share more than just the same “sire” Katherine Pierce, but a human father, a home, an entire set of human

experiences.¹⁶ Most recently, Season 3, dubbed “The Year of the Originals,” follows a set of four brothers and one sister who were turned by their mother into the first vampires, the Originals. These siblings profess the importance of family above all else, but the entire family seems at odds and fundamentally dysfunctional; the illegitimate son, Klaus, subdues his siblings and mother in coffins for hundreds of years, waiting for the right moment to make them a whole family again while running from the father of his brothers and sisters for a millennia, who he eventually succeeds in killing. When their mother returns, she secretly plots to murder her children, after magically bonding them as one and finding a willing sacrificial lamb. These issues are beyond the scope of the human experience entirely; parents do not chase and plot to destroy their own children, just as siblings do not travel with the comatose bodies of their brothers or sisters.

However, studying these vampiric family units reveals that, at least in the case of *The Vampire Diaries*, what bonds one vampire to another is not the blood of the sire, but the blood of family.¹⁷ Family is an ideal retained from the human experience of the vampire, something that did not apply after one became a vampire. For example, when Damon kills and turns Vicki Donovan in the first season, he initially feels some sense of

¹⁶ Other vampires in *The Vampire Diaries* share human bonds that linked them in their supernatural lives as well; for example, mother-daughter pair Pearl and Anna remained together until Pearl was betrayed and imprisoned in a tomb for 150 years. Rose and Trevor, revealed to be brother and sister, served and fled from the Original family for 500 years, another inseparable pair.

In *True Blood* and the *Twilight* series, the bonds of family in the vampire world seem to be drawn along the socially constructed lines of siring rather than biological relation. In *True Blood*, Bill Compton and Jessica share this bond, as do Eric and Pam; in *Twilight*, Carlisle Cullen discovers and turns Esme, Edward, and Rosalie, while Alice and Jasper just “find” the Cullens and connect with their familial values.

¹⁷ Season 3 of *The Vampire Diaries* does confront the relationship of the sire to the vampire; however, unlike the close emotional bond of the vampire and its sire in *True Blood*, like Bill and Jessica, it is a more physical connection. If a member of the Original family of vampires is killed, all vampires in its ‘bloodline’ die as well; thus the idea of vampire siring ultimately leads back to the family, in this series the Original family.

responsibility or duty toward her, but ultimately he does not fulfill the role of “father” to his new vampire creation. Yet, in each season, Damon takes great pains to protect or save his brother from death or evil influences, emotionally confessing to Stefan, “You’re all I’ve got left” (“1912” *The Vampire Diaries*). Indeed, with the vampires that are present throughout the show, “family” is something that consisted of human ties. Family in the vampire world is only for those who were related biologically in their human lives. This is true specifically in *The Vampire Diaries*, where the biological bloodline and the social construct of ‘family’ are often the same.¹⁸

The family in the vampire world is often larger and more closely related than its human counterpart in a dark and strange twist. The Originals family is the largest family in the entire series, nearly equal to *Twilight*’s colossal Cullen clan, and includes four vampire siblings, their hybrid half-brother, a mother who turned them into vampires, and the vampire father who is also a vampire hunter. In contrast, the largest human family by Season 3 of *The Vampire Diaries* would be either the Bennetts, with Bonnie, her newly-turned vampire mother who abandoned her only child at an early age, and a father that has never appeared onscreen, or the Gilberts, with Elena, Jeremy, her adoptive brother / cousin, and Alaric, Elena’s biological vampire mother’s widow, or in other words, her stepfather. Each of these groups is only half the size of the monstrously large Originals,

¹⁸ However, the biological and social constructs of family are also differentiated in the series to reveal not strictly vampire families and human families, but a blend of the two. For the young vampire Caroline, her human mother remains her primary ‘family;’ in this case, the biological and social constructs create a human/ vampire family. Though Elena Gilbert is often a romantic interest for the Salvatore brothers, she is a member of their ‘family’ though predominantly through a social contract, but she also relates to them through their vampiric bloodline by being the human descendant of their sire, Katerina Petrova. This unusual family is based on the social construct of ‘family,’ although there are vestiges of a type of biological/ bloodline relation.

and only the Bennetts are technically a nuclear family unit including father, mother, and child. Even the Bennett family, the most 'complete' human family still presents issues of abandonment, neglect, and absence.

Bonnie's invisible father is not the only type of absence represented in the human family. Often, vacancies are caused by death, which begins even before the reappearance of the vampire brothers in the town of Mystic Falls. For example, Elena Gilbert survives a car accident that claims both her parents' lives just prior to the events of the series begin. However, the death toll rises sharply after vampires and their influence begin to hijack control. Matt's sister, Tyler's father, Bonnie's grandmother, Caroline's father, and Elena's biological parents and aunt all become numbers in an ever-increasing body count of direct and indirect victims of vampires. It would seem that vampire interaction with the human family is a catalyst to its extinction. Those who do not perish require an enormous amount of protection: Alaric and Jeremy possess supernatural rings, Bonnie must use magic, Caroline gains strength when she becomes a vampire, and Elena is constantly guarded by several friends, family, and love interests.

Members of the human family may be dropping at an alarming rate, but one specific role is being specifically targeted and eliminated. At the start of *The Vampire Diaries*, the father is already nearly missing, with Elena's adoptive father dead, Bonnie's father nearly invisible, and Caroline's father divorced and leading a separate life with his boyfriend. Further on, Tyler's father and Elena's biological father die, and in a heartbreaking moment, Caroline's father chooses to die when he decides not to complete

the transformation to become a vampire. His choice upholds the integrity of the human family but obliterates the position of the father figure in the family.¹⁹

The presence of vampires significantly influenced the deaths of nearly all of these characters; often these tragedies were unintentional, indirect results of what Bonnie's grandmother called "vampire business." *Wuthering Heights*' Heathcliff exhibited a similar effect on the rest of the novel's characters; whether intentional or no, exposure to his influence proved corrosive or fatal. Continuing that tradition, the Salvatore brothers, and the Original family, cause so much collateral damage that the human family is reduced to one- or two-person units. Unlike *Wuthering Heights*, which introduces the orphan Heathcliff to a complete Earnshaw family, *The Vampire Diaries* begins when the family has already been fragmented, a situation more reminiscent of *Dracula*. Elena and Jeremy already live with their Aunt Jenna, their friends Matt and Vicki live alone, abandoned by a nameless father and a neglectful mother leaving her children with bills and other adult responsibilities, and Caroline's parents have been long divorced, a workaholic mother and a homosexual father; these family arrangements are contemporary repetitions of the situations of Mina, Jonathan Harker, Van Helsing, and Lord Godalming.

Even more than the fracture of the family, *Dracula* and *The Vampire Diaries* share a tale centered around only children, and more accurately orphans.²⁰ The only

¹⁹ *True Blood* leaves vacant the father role as well; Sookie and Jason Stackhouse lost both their father and grandfather figure before the start of the series, and Sookie's best friend Tara never knows a father figure. Even the next generation seems fatherless, as Arlene's search to find a stepfather for her children proves.

²⁰ The *Twilight* series may not feature a ragtag band of orphans, but nearly all of the characters are only children; Bella and Jacob have no siblings, and there is no mention that their parents had any extended

characters to have real parents at the start of the series are Caroline Forbes and Tyler Lockwood; though by the season currently airing on The CW, both have lost their fathers. The original human protagonists, Elena, Jeremy, Matt, Bonnie, even Caroline and Tyler, are, discover that they are, or become only children over the first season and experience the death of parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and siblings. Elena acknowledges poignantly that all involved have “lost a lot,” but Matt, the human most on the fringe of the supernatural chaos in Mystic Falls, reacts more bitterly, reflecting that their lives have become increasingly “messed up. None of us should have to live this way” (“Bringing out the Dead” *The Vampire Diaries*). These characters are a despondent reflection of the “little band” from *Dracula*; while Arata notes that Quincey Harker, an only child, exposes the decline of the English race, he only hints that the weakening made apparent by the child is also present in the parents and surrogate family. Quincey’s parents and their friends are all only children and orphans, struggling to produce an heir even after a transfusion of vampire blood and the conferral of a “brave [American] friend’s spirit” (Stoker 399). The human gang of *The Vampire Diaries*, at present, poses an alternative forecasted ending for *Dracula*’s crew of vampire hunters, one without the ray of hope offered by Quincey Harker.

The Harker child is born after the battle against the vampire evil is waged and ‘won;’ in *The Vampire Diaries*, until the issue of the vampire is handled or ‘won,’ there is

family. It seems that even the Cullens originated as only children (or were devoid of other human family at their time of transition).

True Blood follows Sookie and Jason Stackhouse, whose parents and grandparents die prematurely, as well as Tara Thornton, whose experience of parenthood involves a drunk, self-professed demon-possessed mother, and Sam Merlott, the owner of the local bar and resident shapeshifter, who was abandoned by both his birth and adoptive families, leaving him seemingly alone in the world. Both of these series integrate a significant number of orphans or only children, as do *The Vampire Diaries* and the prescient *Dracula*.

no hope of producing a human heir. When Elena is faced with the possibility of being forcibly turned into a vampire at the conclusion of Season 2, she confesses to Stefan, "I'm 17 yrs old; how am I supposed to know any of this yet? ...my future, our lives together, those were things I would deal with as they came along. I was supposed to grow up. Decide if I want to have kids and start a family. Grow old. I was supposed to have a lifetime of those choices, and now it's all gone. I don't want to be a vampire... I never wanted to be one." ("The Last Day").²¹ If Elena remains with a vampire, she will not be able to have children; Caroline and Tyler are unable to reproduce because of their undead status, which delegates the responsibility to Jeremy, Bonnie, or Matt, none of whom have a likely prospect of reproducing at the moment. All hope is not lost, however, since this band of humans is exiting adolescence and on the cusp of adulthood, culturally young to begin having children. There has yet been no opportunity for a 'Quincey Harker,' but the series quietly foreshadows that if the influence of the vampire is not removed from these teenagers' lives, their "little band" will dwindle until not even a single descendant is possible.²²

With such a bleak outlook for the human family's survival against the vampire, the so-called 'family of man,' or the community, steps into place to repulse the vampire's attempts to gain access to and a position in the domestic sphere. In *The Vampire Diaries*, this role is filled by the secret collective, the Founder's Council, whose members belong

²¹ The finale of Season 3 indicates that Elena's prophetic quote may have come to pass; with Elena awakened as a vampire at the conclusion of last season, there seems to be no humans of the next generation left to further any family lines.

²² This conflicts with Arata's proposition that in fact, the blood of the Austro-Hungarian vampire and the American spirit were necessary assistance in producing a single English heir. *The Vampire Diaries*, which has not yet shown the possibility of a human heir, does suggest that the human family is assisted by the blood of the vampire in that the blood contains restorative properties to an injured human.

to the founding families of Mystic Falls and whose goal is to defend the town from the vampire threat. The vampire has tried to reclaim its humanity through the family with these methods already: returning to their human home, remaining closely bonded to family ties from their human lives, and interacting with humans, often under the pretense of being human as well. However, being vampires, these creatures naturally pose a threat to the humans who are their prey; death is often an inadvertent side effect of these interactions.

The human family, already broken, is now dying due to exposure to the vampire, and the Council, who justly fears this unintentional death, assumes the responsibility of keeping the vampire out of the family. In the first season, Sherriff Forbes alerts the Council to several vampire-related killings in the area, which results in the Council's decision to reassemble an antique "vampire tracker" and begin a hunt for this unseen 'evil.'²³ This Founder's Council resembles the strange little band formed by the Harkers, Morris, Van Helsing, Holmwood, and Seward in *Dracula*. Although the Founder's Council has been less effective in destroying the vampire to date than the aforementioned group from *Dracula*, both share an intense, almost irrational, fear of the vampire.

The Council is so focused on tracking down this unseen threat that they fail to realize it is in their midst, in the form of Damon Salvatore. When this pretender infiltrates their secret council and gains their trust by supplying vervain, an herb specific to *The Vampire Diaries* world that protects humans from and weakens a vampire, the shared

²³ In *True Blood*, the community (from patrons to wait staff) uses Merlott's Bar and Grill as an unofficial meeting place, a safe environment to express a shared fear of the outsider, the vampire. Though there is no "secret council," residents of Bon Temps, Louisiana, use the local bar handle the perceived vampire threat.

purpose of the collective, keeping the vampire from destroying the families of Mystic Falls, is compromised. Even after Damon is revealed as a vampire, he is permitted to remain on the Council and eventually becomes the head of the Council. The subversive act of offering the leadership position of an anti-vampire secret society to a vampire justifies the presence of these creatures within the community; if a vampire is allowed on the Council, it will also feel welcome within the individual home, since the council failed to expel the threat on a larger scale. Alaric Saltzman, the guardian of Elena and Jeremy Gilbert, succinctly points out the discrepancies in the Council's mission and success when he speaks with Mystic Falls' Sheriff and Mayor, "The council's job is to protect the people of this town. Now your daughter's a vampire and your son's a werewolf. So who's looking after the actual people? Some of them may be family or friends, but they are still supernatural. They don't follow our rules or our laws, they look after themselves, and that's what we need to do" ("Disturbing Behavior"). His passion for protecting humanity from the dangers of the supernatural highlights the absence of this dedication in the leaders of the community and Council, and if the town's leaders cannot be held accountable for continuing the Council's purpose, the safety of Mystic Falls and its residents has been compromised.

Once the human family cannot resist the power of the vampire and the secret Founders' Council of *The Vampire Diaries* has failed in its mission to protect the families of Mystic Falls, the vampire has inadvertently weakened the infrastructure of the institution it so greatly desires to belong to in order to reclaim its humanity. The human families of this small Southern town metaphorically represent a conservative view of

America; the deterioration of these units parallels the weakening of a world superpower, as England was represented in *Wuthering Heights* and *Dracula*. This discouraging analogy demands a response, a solution. To reverse this trend of decay, the nation must stress the need to exclude the vampire from the family; the failure to repel the vampire at the home, communal, and national levels leaves the family open to destruction. The vampire, in attempting to find a place in the domestic sphere and an affirmation of its humanity, further decimates the ideal of the family, his presence becoming a fatal embrace.

Contemporary vampires are not harmless rebels that sparkle in the sun. These creatures are destroying the stable foundations of the family. The contemporary television series conservatively argue through the way they represent the American family that the vampire must be kept out of the family; in fact, these texts demand more than the alienation or separation of the vampire. They crave the eradication of the vampire along with the restoration and preservation of the human family. As much as I and other consumers of vampire texts wish to invite the vampire into the home because of the lust and adventure these figures inspire, current television shows, such as *The Vampire Diaries* and *True Blood*, are actually asserting that if the family is to survive, the vampire must be forced out of the domestic sphere. The vampire as an “included yet excluded” figure to the vampire inside the family cannot work; the vampire, being “almost the same, but not quite,” to borrow Bhabha’s phrase, still brings death and destruction no matter how similar it appears or how much it desires to be human. Like the gothic tales of the Victorian era, American television serials yearn for the restoration of the traditional

domestic sphere. This desire betrays similar anxieties of nation and family present in the nineteenth century and its texts. These Victorian fears linked the deterioration of the conventional family to the loss of power in domestic England. The parallels between the cultural anxieties in Victorian England and contemporary America raise questions about how far American society has progressed since the Victorian era. Has America really advanced beyond the fear of “the other,” especially in the domestic sphere? Our culture’s current obsession with the vampire reveals that lurking beneath the desire for the brooding, glittering heroes in these narratives are the Victorian anxieties of the “other” that lurk in our subconscious, living on in our thoughts.

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